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ACTION ARA-01

INFO LOG-00 ACDA-13 AID-01 AMAD-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 DPR-01
EB-01 HA-09 H-01 INRE-00 INR-01 L-03 ADS-00
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P 112045Z DEC 91
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6801
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LIMA
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 13098

CINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, MASS, PINS, VE
SUBJECT: CAP'S MESSAGE TO AIR FORCE: "UNDERSTAND THE
- TIMES WE ARE GOING THROUGH"

1. (U) SUMMARY: PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ HAS
SENT A LETTER TO COMMANDER OF THE AIR FORCE, PRAISING
ITS ROLE IN DEFENDING DEMOCRACY AND REQUESTING ITS
CONTINUED UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPECIAL SITUATION THE
COUNTRY FACES. END SUMMARY.

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2. (U) ON THE OCCASION OF THE 71ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FOUNDING OF THE VENEZUELAN AIR FORCE, PRESIDENT CARLOS
ANDRES PEREZ (CAP) SENT A LETTER DATED DECEMBER 10, TO
THE AIR FORCE COMMANDER, EUTIMIO FUGUET BORREGALES. CAP
MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- "THE PREPARATION OF THE FAV (VENEZUELAN AIR FORCE)
MUST BE DONE IN HARMONY WITH THE SITUATION OF THE
COUNTRY. THE EQUIPMENT THAT OUR AIR FORCE POSSESSES IS
MODERN WITH FIRST-CLASS TECHNOLOGY. THE COUNTRY MUST

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PROVIDE ENOUGH RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN THIS (EQUIPMENT) IN EXCELLENT CONDITION. WE APPEAL ... TO (THE MILITARY) MEN AND WOMEN, TO CONSERVE AND MAINTAIN THAT WHICH WE HAVE."

-- "I KNOW THAT FAN (THE VENEZUELAN ARMED FORCES) ARE EXPERIENCING, LIKE THE REST OF THE COUNTRY, THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTED BY (OUR) SOCIETY. ON THE ONE HAND, THE AUSTERITY OF DIFFICULT TIMES (FORCED US) TO ADJUST TO LESS RESOURCES. ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU WERE SEVERELY CRITICIZED IN THESE TURBULENT TIMES AS THE COUNTRY CONFRONTS DEEP REFORMS AND PREPARES ITSELF TO CHANGE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR, IN ORDER TO IMPOSE STRICT CONTROL OF THE NATIONAL PATRIMONY, (WHICH IN TURN) PROVOKES INVESTIGATIONS AND ANALYSIS THAT APPEAR AS SIGNS OF DETERIORATION, INSTEAD AS THE EXPRESSION OF THE STRINGENT CONTROLS PRODUCED BY THE (DECISION) TO RESTRUCTURE INSTITUTIONS."

-- "THE ARMED FORCES, LIKE ALL THE (OTHER) SECTORS OF
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SOCIETY, KNOW HOW TO SUBMIT (THEMSELVES) TO CONTROL AND THE INSPECTION OF THEIR ACTIONS. ...BECAUSE OF THIS, (THE ARMED FORCES) THEMSELVES HAVE INITIATED CONTROL PROCESSES (IN IMPLEMENTING) DECISIONS. THERE WERE NO INVESTIGATIONS DURING THIS CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD OF IRREGULAR ACTIONS BY THE ARMED FORCES WHICH (WERE NOT) INITIATED BY (THE ARMED FORCES) THEMSELVES."

-- "MUCH HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT AND MAINTENANCE, AS WELL AS ABOUT N OTHER ACQUISITIONS AND CONTRACTS (BY THE) PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. WE HAVE MADE AN EFFORT TO OPEN THESE NEGOTIATIONS TO PUBLIC OPINION, (AND) HAVE INSTITUTED TRANSPARENT BIDDING (PROCEDURES)."

-- "I EXHORT THE OFFICERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF VENEZUELA TO UNDERSTAND THE TIMES WE AS WELL AS THE REST OF THE WORLD ARE GOING THROUGH. IT IS A TIME OF CHANGES, OF INCERTITUDES, BUT ABOVE ALL, IT IS A TIME TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE SOCIETY OF THE NEXT CENTURY."

3. (U) CAP ENDED HIS LETTER BY CALLING ON THE "MEN AND WOMEN OF OUR ARMED FORCES TO STRENGTHEN THEIR PROFESSIONAL SPIRIT AND TO DEEPEN THEIR FAITH IN DEMOCRACY."

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COMMENT

4. (C) CAP'S LETTER IS SIGNIFICANT FOR ITS
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF RECENT
ECONOMIC CHANGES ON THE WELL-BEING OF ARMED FORCES
PERSONNEL. THE GOV HAS BEEN PROFESSING THE INTENT TO DO
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SOMETHING ABOUT THIS PROBLEM FOR SOME TIME. THE RECENT
SPATE OF COUP RUMORS AND GROWING POPULAR UNREST, BY
SPOTLIGHTING THE ARMED FORCES' ESSENTIAL ROLE IN
SOCIETY, ALSO INCREASE THE PRESSURE ON THE CIVILIAN
AUTHORITIES TO DO SOMETHING. MINISTER OF DEFENSE OCHOA
ANTICH'S RECENT PUBLICIZED DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM OF
MILITARY MEN'S STANDARDS OF LIVING (WITH STUDENTS OF THE
INSTITUTE OF HIGHER DEFENSE STUDIES), AND REPORTED AD
PARTY PRESSURE ON CAP TO TAKE ACTION IN THIS REGARD, MAY
HAVE HELPED PROMPT THIS LETTER. LOOK FOR SOMETHING MORE
CONCRETE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. SKOL

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